

ATTENTION!

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“Hear ye him.”
Matthew 17:5

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured, there came a voice from the bright, overshadowing cloud, which said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.” It was the voice of the Father concerning His Son—a testimony to His person, a notification of His office, an announcement of His authority to teach and to legislate. You can understand how imperative it then was for those who heard it to heed Him.

But now He is gone up from us. He has entered into the excellent glory. He no more teaches in our streets, yet still, as though present with us, He speaks to us. By the written Word, His sayings are handed down to us infallibly. Often times, when the Holy Spirit rests upon God’s servants, they become as the voice of Christ to us, and when that same blessed Spirit, as the Comforter, brings to our remembrance the things of Christ, seems it not as though Jesus Himself spoke to our souls? The admonition is not out of date, it has not lost its telling point or its vital force. Still does the Father say to us concerning His well-beloved Son, “Hear ye him.”

Let us proceed to meditate on this sacred charge. The three little words may give rise to four short questions. *Why? What? How? When?*

I. WHY SHOULD WE HEAR HIM?

It might serve for a sufficient answer, had we no other reply, because God Himself commands us. This injunction comes of the Father, “Hear ye him.” Over and over again are we enjoined to listen to the voice of Christ. Every messenger from God ought to have our respectful attention, how much more the greatest of all messengers, that messenger of the covenant, the Messiah, the sent One, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession? Did not JEHOVAH Himself say, “This is my Son.” It seemed reasonable that the Son should receive more reverence than any of the servants.

If senators and patriots, counselors and prophets, had been stoned and cast out of the vineyard, deference might yet be paid to the Son. If their perverseness had refused Him homage, their scruples might have sheltered Him from indignity. Surely they would not go so far as to cast out the Son Himself. There is a willfulness, a defection of heart, an enormity of sin in refusing to hear the Christ of God, for which it is difficult to find terms.

Appointed, anointed, commissioned of the Father to speak to us, to confer with us, to make known amongst us the mind and will of our great and gracious Sovereign, it becomes treason and blasphemy of the highest order and the deepest dye for us to refuse to heed His presence or listen to His words.

Why hear Him? do you ask? *Does not our Lord Jesus Christ Himself deserve to be heard?* Peerless among the princes of heaven, is He not very God of very God? And immaculate among the children of men, is He not man of the substance of His mother? Here is a double claim upon our attention. Beaming with divinity, instinct with humanity, He speaks as never man spake, clothing the highest oracles in the most familiar parables.

And will you not hear what this God-man has to say? Is He not perfect in wisdom, pure in motive, and undeviating in truthfulness? To whom should we listen, if we turn away from Him? He has all those high sanctions which should claim our allegiance and all those sweet traits of character which should attract our regard. If we will not listen to such an one as Jesus of Nazareth, the gentle, and meek, and

lowly, yet the truthful, the honest, and the brave, to whom will we ever lend an attentive ear? O sons of men, there was never mentor or orator so worthy of your regard as Jesus Christ. Never philosopher who had such maxims to deliver, or such mysteries to unfold as this man—the Son of God—the Incarnate Wisdom.

Why will you not hear Him, when *the message He has come to communicate concerns yourselves*, your present and future welfare, your most solemn interests? The tidings He brings are, indeed, laden with ten thousand blessings for us, if we will but incline our ear and hearken to them. He comes to redress our grievances, to retrieve our disasters, to redeem our souls, to secure our prosperity, to effect our salvation.

As an Ambassador from God, He comes, not to treat upon small matters, to settle petty disputes, or to advise upon local or temporary affairs, but with supreme authority to show how sinful man may be reconciled to his Maker, how the foul stains of transgression may be washed away, and scarlet sins become white as snow. He comes to tell us how we may escape the impending doom of hell and how we may attain an inheritance in heaven. To fit us for that high estate, and that blessed society, He comes to cleanse us from our corruptions and to endow us with a nature that is divine, and faculties that are suited to the celestial glory.

Such a message as this should enamor our very selfishness and constrain our ambition to regard it with favor. Hear ye him. O you sick and wounded, will you not listen to the physician? O you bankrupt debtors, will you not hearken to the jubilee trumpet that proclaims your debts paid and your forfeited rights restored? O you outcasts, wandering all forlorn, in climes uncongenial to your health, your peace, your homely joys, will you not heed the voice of a guide who comes to conduct you in safety to your fatherland?

O you despairing souls, He sets before you an open door. You famished poor, He invites you to a banquet—a banquet richly provisioned with all the dainties of eternal love. With such words upon His lips, such blessed news to bring to such needy creatures, our Lord Jesus Christ may well claim to be heard.

There is a further argument which ought to have thrilling force among full many of you, my hearers. *With what zest should we hear Him who profess to be His disciples.* Years ago some of us took His easy yoke upon our shoulders and we bless His name it has never galled them, neither are we weary of the load. He is our Master and our Lord, and if He be so, surely our proper place is at His feet. It is an ill thing of us, and untruthful, if we call Him Master, and yet will not believe what He teaches.

If we say to Him, “Rabboni,” and yet turn aside to hail some fellow-creature—be he a noted saint long since dead, or a party leader who still survives among us, as our captain and commander-in-chief. If Peter be our master, let us call him so. If Calvin be our master, let us call him so. And if Wesley be our master, let us call him so. But if we be disciples of Jesus, then let us follow Jesus and follow Him with other men only so far as we perceive they followed Christ. Hear ye *Him*, O you disciples, if you be His disciples.

Will you enlist as His soldiers and shrink from His lead? Will you engage to be His servants and yet violate His orders? Will you who declare that He is your Chieftain and wear His uniform, cede your homage to other masters? Nay, by all that is honest and just, pure and comely, and of good report, the shame would fester in every believer’s conscience. You call Him, “Master and Lord,” and you say well, for so He is, but prove yourselves to be truly His disciples by hearing Him.

To the rest—(I am grieved at heart that I should have to speak of “the rest,” but we know there is such a remnant here)—to those who are not His disciples, there is an argument, that if it tell not now, will tell hereafter. You must hear Him in the day of grace, or else *you shall hear Him in that day of judgment* and perish forever. Do you refuse to hear Christ? There are not any tidings of mercy to be heard elsewhere. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.”

O sinners, hear you the Savior's voice! O wanderers, hear your Shepherd's voice! O you dying, hear your Physician's voice! I will add, O you dead, hear you the voice of the great quickener, for the time is come that they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and they that hear Him shall live. "Hear ye him?"

Thus with general arguments suitable to all, and with special arguments suitable for those who have believed, and for those who have not believed, we leave with you a few of the reasons why.

Our second catch-word is—

II. WHAT?

What are we to hear? "Hear ye *him*." There is much to hear concerning the person of Christ, the actions of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, and the offices of Christ, but the fullness of all revelation is embodied in Himself. Greater than the greatest sermon that was ever preached in the world, is the Word made flesh. He is the manifestation of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Would you know God, you must know Christ. "He that hath seen me" (it is His own testimony) "hath seen the Father."

In the character of Jesus, the character of God is reflected with ineffable purity. The invisible God is in Him, made visible to men as far as the sense of faith can behold Him—ininitely farther than the natural senses can discern. The infinite can never be brought down to the level of our puny intelligence, so as to be comprehended by us, yet in the presence of Christ we are conscious of the infinite. It is palpable to us as a mountain that cannot be scaled, but under whose shadow we can find shelter.

And when we look to Christ and listen to His voice, we are as those who gaze on the vast ocean, in which, to our poor minds, the infinite is mirrored forth, for, as far as the vision can stretch, there is no bound, no shore beyond, and His words sound on and on like the mighty sea, through time that knows no limit and through eternity that has no end. He is the wisdom of God and the power of God.

Hear Him, then. Hear Him. Let His voice break on your ears as the music of the main, in that melodious anthem, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Or in that thrilling utterance, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Hear *Him*, I say, hear *Him*. As the sound of many waters, as the chorus of the waves, hear this, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." View Christ as a child who must be about His Father's business and as a man who must work the works of His Father while it is day. Know Him as a teacher and a guide, mark His zeal to minister, and His devotedness to suffer. Then let poets sing of "Nature," if they please. Let them call it "the thin veil which half conceals and half reveals the face and lineaments of God," as some of them have done.

But let Christians bear me witness that the simple tale of Christ living among men, with which we delight to make ourselves more and more familiar, unveils the attributes of God in words and deeds of mercy and compassion, of patience and long-suffering, of sweet mindfulness and great marvel in such clearness as days of sunshine and moonlight nights could never teach you, though more than three-score years and ten of these revolving seasons should pass over your head.

But especially read God in the death of Jesus. Behold the divine justice gleaming there, for He wakens His sword that He may sheath it in the heart of the great Shepherd, and that the sheep may escape its keen edge. See there the love of God, who spared not His own Son. See all the divine attributes marvelously blended on the cross in the bleeding person of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father. Hear Him.

And now do you hear tell of Him as He goes beyond the stars and enters the pearl gate to take possession of His well-earned crown? Let us hear Him there and understand that He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us. Hear the voice of His ascension, as it proclaims the justification of those for whom He died and rose again, and the assurance of the eternal perfection of all those for whom His blood was shed—"for this man hath perfected for ever them that are set apart, by the one sacrifice that he hath offered." Hear Him.

His very person and everything connected with Him speaks with trumpet tongue. Hear what God says to you by Him. Oh! I wish that we were more attentive to the Lord Jesus Christ, but I am afraid many of us are very superficial in our considerations of our Savior. We do not labor “to comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths.” God speaks to dull ears. Though His accents are far more sweet than music when He speaks by Jesus Christ, yet a very large part of what God has thus said to us, many of you have not hitherto understood.

Let me remind you, dear friends, that the Lord Jesus has many forms of speaking—many varieties of utterance. Sometimes *He instructs*. He is a great didactic teacher and He has spoken by the mouth of His apostles, as well as with His own lips. The truths that were uttered in His name, like the miracles that were wrought in His name, have the impress of His sovereign authority. Hence that summary of Christian doctrine which Paul was inspired of the Holy Spirit to open up, was the plain result of the life of Jesus, a key to interpret what He said and did.

Did you read in the Gospels how He obeyed the Father? In the epistles you read of that obedience as a *righteousness imputed* to all who believe. Do you find in the Gospels a minute account of the Lord Jesus—the epistles will tell you that His death was a *propitiation* for our sins. Do the Gospels furnish you with proofs of His rising from the dead? The epistles will assure you that He was raised for our *justification*. Do you learn from the Gospels that He ascended up into heaven? The epistles will teach you that He ever lives to make intercession for us. We are bound to take our theology from the entire Scriptures.

Where, and when, and by whomsoever Christ speaks to us, let us hear Him. The well of theology undefiled is the Word of God. We err when we pin our profession to creeds of human devising. Creeds are exceedingly useful and I hope they will never be discarded. In fact, they never can be, for every man has a creed, whether he likes to think so or not. He has a consistent or an inconsistent one. But our creed must not be the dogmas of general councils, or the opinions of learned men, much less must it be the reflection of “modern thought,” which is full of infidelity, but it must be the truths which we have received directly from the Word of God.

And surely, after reading controversies upon theology, one has often said, like David, “Oh! that one would give me a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is within the gate! Oh! that I could get a drink of the water from the wellhead—from Scripture itself” And you do well, my brethren, if your only Doctor of Divinity is Christ, and if He is your only body of divinity, for, indeed, was there ever any other body of divinity under heaven save Jesus Christ? Let my doctrine be what Christ taught. Let my reason for believing it be that He said so. Let me sit at His feet and learn of Him, and let Him be my authority. I shall want no better argument, if I gather my reason from the fact that He has declared it.

But the Word of the Lord is not always the voice of instruction, it is sometimes spoken in peremptory tones, *commanding us*. The Lord Jesus Christ has given many absolute injunctions to His people. Some there are amongst us—we grieve to confess it—who are not so fond of His precepts as of His doctrines. They will hear the preaching that sets forth the precious doctrines of grace and the sweet promises of the covenant with very great delight, as I hope we all do, but at the mention of the precepts and practical obligations, they are offended and afraid that there is more of a legal twang than of a Gospel tone in the sermon. Perhaps such fears have too often been justified.

At the same time, brethren, we should always be ready to suffer the word of exhortation and be as content to do for Christ that which He enjoins, as to get from Christ that which He freely bestows. That saying of the mother of Jesus to those who waited at the feast of Cana is good advice for us all. She said to the servants, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

Does Christ command separation from the world—separate yourselves and come you out. Does Christ command cross-bearing and going without the camp—take up your cross cheerfully and follow Him outside the camp. Does Christ command integrity of character and holiness of life—oh! that we might be blameless in the one and exemplary in the other. Does He command love, a kindly affection for the brethren and a practical benevolence towards all mankind—let us diligently cherish both.

Does He command us to forgive injuries, to show a peaceable disposition—then let us bear and forbear in advance of all the maxims of society, stimulated by the noble example of our Lord, and obedient to the law of His mouth. Do you call the blessed Jesus your Lord and Master? “Hear ye him.” Heed His precepts, as well as listen to His doctrine.

Often, too, by way of direction, does our Lord speak to us. How wisely would our lives be ordered, did we simply and sincerely follow Christ’s guidance. We often make glaring mistakes in trivial matters, because we fancy ourselves able to direct our own steps in plain, common paths. Many a man has gone straight through an intricate course, because he has prayed earnestly, and in answer to prayer he has found out the narrow channel between the quicksands and the rocks.

Yet on other occasions that same man has committed folly in Israel, because he thought it was fair sailing, and he did not want to take the divine pilot on board. Let us in all things, great or small, ask counsel of Christ, and when once we know His will, let us never have a second thought. It is not ours to reason or to question, but it is ours to suffer loss and endure reproach, if need be, when we have His orders.

The Christian’s, like the soldier’s, duty is to obey. Be it to do or to die, it is imperative that he lay his judgment at the feet of his commander. His judgment is never sounder than when he defers to his chief, demurs to nothing, and decides at the spur of prescript or prohibition. With His charge for your chart, be ready to hear His direction.

Nor is there any lack in another particular. Full often, blessed be His name, Christ gives us the *word of consolation*. Unhappy are those disciples who turn a deaf ear to these sweet refreshments. We do know some who are so sickly and depressed in spirit, that “their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh unto the gates of death.” “My soul refuseth to be comforted,” says the Psalmist, and there are persons in that pitiable condition.

But dear friends, when Jesus deigns to comfort, surely it is wise to obey the injunction, “Hear ye him.” Why, if I could not believe the promise of my father, or the promise of my brother, yet must I believe the promise of my Savior. He cannot deceive. He would not speak flattering words. It were not possible for Him to buoy me up with specious consolations, showing me the bright side of the picture, and veiling the darker shadows. Oh! no. He has said Himself, “If it were not so, I would have told you.”

He is perfectly ingenuous in what He says. He conceals nothing which is profitable for us to know. He is Himself transparent truth. When He says to me—to you—“Let not your hearts be troubled! Ye believe in God: believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions,” shall we not dismiss our fears, renew our hearty confidence in Him, believe in the many mansions, and look forward to them?

And if He says to us (as He does), “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” if He declares, “I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,” should we not ground our full assurance on His simple assertion? Are we to question what He affirms because it seems too good to be true? May it not remind us of that famous speech of the Lord by the mouth of His servant Isaiah, “As the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Oh! bow your ear, you mournful one, disconsolate as you are, I marvel not that you do refuse earthly sedatives, but I wonder much that you should deny yourself these heavenly restoratives. The oil and wine that Jesus brings must be healing and healthful. The ointment that He puts upon you will not aggravate your sores, but will cure your malady. Yield yourself to His generous treatment. The spirit of Christ never comforts unwisely. Rejoice that He has given the Spirit and still speaks by the Spirit unto the mourners in Zion.

I might linger over these and kindred reflections. When our Lord speaks by way of warning and bids you, “Flee from the wrath to come,” hear you Him. When He speaks by way of exhortation or of invitation, saying, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” then, “hear ye him.” If His tone should seem somewhat severe to your souls, and your flesh should revolt

against it, yet, “Hear ye him.” His lips are as lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, always sweet smelling and healing like the myrrh.

Oh! regard Him. Catch His faintest accents. Treasure His words. Take your tablets and write down what He says, but let your tablets be your heart’s best flesh, made soft by the power of the regenerating Spirit. Pray the Holy Ghost to write upon your souls, to carve deeply upon your hearts, all that Jesus Christ may speak to you. This is what we would have you hear. “Hear ye *him*.”

The third word about which some remarks were to cluster was—

III. HOW?

How shall we hear Him? We have shown you that He speaks in the Word of Scripture, that He speaks through His sent servants, that He speaks by His Holy Spirit to the hearts of His people. How shall we hear Him, then? Undoubtedly it becomes us to listen *with devout reverence*. Let us revere every truth of Scripture, for the sacred authority with which it comes to us.

Every rightly constituted mind must feel shocked at the way in which certain parts of God’s Word are treated by the thoughtless, as well as the profane. I believe, brethren, that the habit of trifling with the minutest detail of God’s house is very sinful. I know that it has led to much mischief in the church of God.

I remember hearing a minister speak of the controversy about baptism with palpable levity. It made me shudder when he said that for his part, he did not care two cents about baptism. Is there not a baptism of the Lord’s commandment? Some sort of baptism there is, at any rate, which Christ has enjoined. God forbid that I should scoff at it.

Where is your loyalty to the Son of God, if you rudely snap your fingers at any ordinance He has appointed? You that hear may account it of no consequence, but He that declared it to us well knew its profound importance, for He said, “Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.”

You have coined a new proverb to supersede the old statutes. “There are no sects in heaven,” you inform us. Then, having forged a text, you supply us with a commentary. “These points are really nonessential,” you tell us, “it would promote love and concord utterly to ignore them.” Nay, sirs, but the *points* of which you speak so lightly are not mere specks on the horizon—they are more like lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night—let them be to you for signs and for seasons.

“They are not essential for salvation,” says one. Be it so, and yet they may be essential for approbation, I reply. As a servant, “Will you willfully offend because the penalty is to be reproved, not to be discharged? As a pupil in the school of Christ, will you violate His laws, because you will only be put to the bottom of the class, and no one supposes you will be expelled from the school? Has it come to this with you, professing Christian, that to escape from hell is the only thing you care about? Are you of so mean, so beggarly a spirit, that, provided you get saved, it is all you are concerned about?”

Dear friends, after we are saved, it is essential to the peace of our conscience that we search the Word of God to know the will of Christ concerning us, and that in every particular, as far as we are able, we endeavor to do His will. You may err through ignorance, not knowing that you are doing wrong. That is a sin, a sin concerning which Christ says that you shall be beaten with few stripes. But it is an aggravation of sin when a person does not wish to know His Lord’s will, nay, refuses to inquire, and thinks it quite unimportant—for such willfulness the servant, to use our Lord’s own words, “shall be beaten with many stripes.”

God save us from the censure, as well as the penalty of that transgression. Never treat with levity any text of Scripture. Never suppose that, because the truth is considered small by the men of your generation, that it is, therefore, inconsiderable in the eyes of Him who rules throughout all generations. The sweepings of the lapidary’s shop, where diamonds are polished, are precious—how much more should each member of the whole church be jealous of every minute particle of truth! Small errors are the seedlings from which gigantic heresies spring up. The more accord with the mind of Christ there is in the individual disciples of Jesus, the more concord there will be in the visible church. Unity is not

promoted by endorsing one another's faults, but by conspiring with one another to maintain the Master's statutes.

Let us hear believingly. Some are troubled with doubts and fears, and others foster them as if they were accessories to faith, and proofs of a ingenuous disposition. We have heard from the philosophic side that there is more faith in doubting than in crediting the revealed Word. Really, such cant I do not care to quote. The marvel is that it gets currency for an hour. The class of doubters we have abroad in the present day may well be always declaring that they are honest, since there is so much reason to suspect the honesty of their doubts. And then there are Christian people who think it a commendable humility and an excellent feature of experience, to entertain doubts, to make a profession of fears, and to cast reflections on "the full assurance of faith," as though it were presumptuous and unbecoming.

From the tone of their conversation you might infer that the promise of the Gospel is to him that doubts and hesitates to show his allegiance, rather than to him that believes and is baptized, that he shall be saved. The new birth is a grave subject to their thinking. It fills them with terror, instead of inspiring them with hope. But their morbid views are all wrong, my brethren. What Christ has said is true, infallibly true. It is not to be lightly questioned, but implicitly relied on. Be it ours to accept from His lips whatever of teaching, of consolation, or promise He may utter.

And let *us hear Him expectantly*, with the full assurance of hope, knowing that He is faithful who has promised. Especially in the matter of prayer, let us encourage the utmost confidence that He will hear us. Have you not caught yourselves sometimes telling of the remarkable answers you have obtained, as if it caused you the greatest possible surprise that you should ask and receive? Meet and right it is, my dear brother, that you should relate what God has done for you, but is it quite right for you to express astonishment that He has fulfilled His own engagements? Should it be accounted strange by God's own children that their Father keeps His word? Are His oracles so equivocal, that when they are literally fulfilled, we lift up our hands in blank amazement?

Not so, beloved. Better far the saying of that aged Christian woman, who, when she heard a young disciple relate the answer he had got to the prayer he had offered, and finish up his story with the exclamation, "Wasn't it surprising?" replied, "No, it is just like Him." As it is His wont and custom to keep His word, let us always hear Him expectantly.

And let me charge you, beloved friends, that you take heed by the power of God's Spirit always to *hear Jesus Christ obediently*. There is a way of hearing that is worse than not hearing at all. Who are so deaf as those that will not hear? or hearing, will not obey? How often has the Lord called some of you and yet you have not come to Him? Though He has taught you much, you have not learned anything. Though He has exhorted you many times, you have not stirred. Though He has frequently warned you, you have taken no heed.

Oh! that we obeyed, instantly obeyed Him, scrupulously obeyed Him, universally obeyed Him—inquired and ascertained His will, with an eagerness to do His bidding. Fain would I be like a cork upon the waters, that feels every breath of the wind and every rise of the wave—not like some great steam vessel, that needs a storm to make it roll. Would to God we were delicately sensitive to the mind of Christ, like the photographer's sensitive plate that catches the image as it passes and permanently retains the reflection, so that when Jesus Christ's perfect image comes before our soul, it might be there stamped upon us to abide uneffacedly evermore.

Oh! my dear brothers and sisters, ponder this pensively. Pray over it privately. Ask yourselves personally, are we all thus hearing the Lord Jesus Christ? Come to close quarters—let us put it pointedly—are any of you living in habitual disregard of your Lord's will? If so, you are unhappy, I know you are. You cannot be happy until you come and yield yourself up to Him. What is the true posture of a servant but to wait his master's beck and bidding? Where can you expect to know the sweetness of Christ but in owning Him as your Lord, and yielding your souls in allegiance to Him?

Cry to God, then, for cleansing from the errors of the past. Invoke His help to make your obedience complete, now and in days to come. We know we are not saved by *our* obedience, we are saved already

by *His* obedience, but for the love we bear His name, what was our gain, we count our loss, and we desire to render ourselves as living sacrifices unto Him, which is but our reasonable service. Thus let us hear Him.

I beseech you, you who listen to me from Sabbath to Sabbath, never to take aught of your beliefs from my sermons unless you can verify them from His sayings. I would cheerfully blot out from your recollection every dogma that has no authority but my own. I would urge you to give it like chaff to the wind. Let your soul be established upon the truth as it is in Jesus. "Hear ye him." Whatever He says, accept beyond appeal. Let that be your postulatam and your ultimatum, the beginning of your confidence and the end of all your controversy.

Should Christ's teaching take you out of our connection, or out of any association where you now are, never mind, follow it. Through floods or flames, if Jesus leads, follow His guidance. Don't be foolish enough to take up with impressions that are merely of the flesh. Don't be forever changing and shifting with the currents of opinion. Don't have windmills on the brain. Read well, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Having done so, if nobody in this world beside yourself professes to believe the truth that Christ has taught, believe it all the more intensely. Be concerned that so much dishonor should be done Him by so many being in ignorance or error, but be concerned to honor Him yourself by holding that truth firmly which others overlook or despise.

"The Bible, and the Bible alone," said Chillingworth, in that oft quoted opinion of his, "is the religion of Protestants," but I am afraid it is hardly a fact. It ought to be true and it would be true, were we true to Christ. It is the professed religion of Christendom. The Word of God applied to the soul by the eternal Spirit becomes to us the voice of Christ, and we desire to hear it. God help us to hear it.

One more question remains to be answered.

IV. WHEN?

When shall we hear Him? The reply must be, *Evermore!* Hear Him when you begin your Christian career. "Hear, and your soul shall live." "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." It is the hearing of Him that quickens the soul. "Incline your ear," says He, "and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live."

Nor are we to give up hearing Christ after we have found life in Him. We are to continue still learning of Him. We shall never grow so wise that we do not need Him for a teacher. We shall never be so experienced that we can find our own way and no longer need Him as a guide. We shall have to keep on hearing Him when our locks are grey and our age is reverend. When we are on the banks of Jordan, and our feet almost tread the hallowed soil of the border land, even then, brethren, we must still hear Him.

And then across the river His voice will greet us. We shall forever hear Him in the upper skies. The great matter, however—great because it presses so heavily on our present interest and our future destiny—is that we hear Him *now*. "*Today* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years."

May we have grace to hear Him now. If we do not hear Him now, speaking with the voice of mercy, tomorrow we may hear Him say, "I never knew you." It would be a terrible hearing that, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity!" The thunder of those dreadful words will be everlasting. May God, of His infinite grace, save us from hearing the dreary sentence of the Judge by enabling us to hear now the cheery welcome of the Savior.

And do you not think, dear friends, it would be well that believers should have a special time for hearing Christ every day? Might you not mark off a quarter of an hour in the day for hearing what God the Lord shall speak? In the middle of London, amidst all the din of traffic, the sweetest chimes cannot be heard, they are drowned. But that same music, when other sounds are hushed, will be extremely pleasant.

We have the rush and crash of the world in our ears nearly all day. If we want to hear Christ's voice, we must get alone sometimes and sit in silence. It is the best commerce a man can engage in—it brings in the richest treasure. He will be poor who does not set apart some time in which He can listen to the voice of Christ, by searching the Scriptures, by drawing near to God, by watching and prayer.

Even the public prayer meetings should be second to private intercessions. "This ought ye to have done," I would say of the prayer meeting, "not to have left the other undone." Both should be regarded, for oftentimes in the morning, if one can get a text of Scripture and put it under the tongue, it will keep the mouth sweet, and the breath sweet, and the heart sweet all day long.

And at night, when one is weary, it gives calmness to our slumbers and even makes our dreams pleasant, if we can get a kiss from the lips of the spouse in some joyful promise, some precious portion of the Word of God.

"Hear ye him," my brethren. "Hear ye him." The Lord unstop your ears to hear, O you that have never heard Him. And you that have heard Him often, may you hear Him yet more frequently and more familiarly, till He shall say unto you, "Come up hither," and you shall finally enter into His joy. God bless each one of us richly for Christ's sake. Amen.

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